

→ must protect widest possible expression
of individuality in order to allow
human spirit to discover
innate possibilities

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)

→ Dickens

- born in London, England; son of James Mill (member of the philosophic radicals), and godson of Jeremy Bentham; rigorously educated by his father until he had a nervous breakdown at 20 - at which time he turned to Coleridge and Wordsworth because the habit of analysis tends to wear away feelings; at 24 fell in love with Harriet Taylor who was married, they waited 20 years for John Taylor to die before they married; at 53 became a member of parliament and wrote "On Liberty"; was godfather of Bertrand Russell

Political Philosophy

- political problem - a conflict between liberty and authority, tension between society and the state; liberty is protection of society via the state as well as protection from the state; three stages in the problem's evolution:

1. traditional rule (Hobbesian) - authority is derived by inheritance (kings) or conquered, it is not by the consent of the people; not contest, just accepted; this is a dangerous situation for the protection of freedom

2. the emergence of classical liberalism (Locke) - individuals struggling for a protected domain; need a wall of protection; need constitutional rights; it is better for the state to have power over society, than for the powerful in society to have power over the weak

3. democracy (Rousseau) - rulers should not have independent power but should be the representatives of the people; rulers are revocable; must identify the rulers and the ruled, put government into the hands of the people

BUT - Rousseau's democracy is an ideal and is not attainable; the French revolution was enough to shatter this idealistic dream and create terror; in a democracy the will of the people is usually the will of the majority who may oppress the minority; tyranny of opinion prevails (tendency of society to impose its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct which prevents the formation of individuality)

SO - need to set up safeguards against freedom denying forces; must set limits to the actions of government - the only time one can interfere with another's freedom is in self-protection; the only time power can be exercised over someone is to prevent harm to others.

Limits to Government - should not interfere when...

- the action can be done better by private persons
- when it is more desirable for private persons than government to interfere for their own devilmnt and education
- when there is danger that too much power will unnecessarily accrue to the government

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Great Expectations
Oliver Twist
David Copperfield

XVII
Louis XVIII: pas
- rached in reu
people's
rains of terror
killed wealthy
people
1789-1795
tyranny of
majority.

On Liberty

- arguments for liberty are arguments for individualism; men must be free to express their thoughts and beliefs because truth is most quickly discovered when opportunity is given to refute falsehoods; the concept of liberty was conceived as a precondition for developing the full possibilities of human nature; what more or better can be said of any condition of human affairs than that it brings human beings themselves nearer to the best thing they can be.

- liberty is the protection of each individual against the tyranny of the political rulers

- aim of the patriots was to set limits to the power which the ruler should be suffered to exercise over the community; attempted two ways:

1. by obtaining a recognition of political liberties which rulers were not to infringe
2. the establishment of constitutional checks by which the consent of the community was made a necessary condition to some of the more important acts of the governing power

- need rules of conduct to make adjustment between individual independence and social control; existence is only valuable if people's harmful actions are restrained and enforced

- there has been no consistency in government through the ages or between countries; no one can uniformly decide or agree what is right; obviously, people do not decide things with reason, but by personal preference

- in the maturity of their faculties, people have absolute independence over themselves, their bodies, and minds; the individual is sovereign; those in a state to require care by others must be protected against their own actions as well as external injury;

- people must be punished for harm cause unless it is best left to his own discretion or if the attempt to exercise control would produce evils greater than those which it would prevent (no more than an eye)

Principles of Liberty

1. demands liberty of conscience - absolute freedom of opinion; liberty of publishing opinions
2. liberty of tastes and pursuits - freedom to live the life we choose to live without persecution from others, so long as we do not harm them
3. liberty of combinations of individuals - freedom to unite for any purpose not involving harm to others

BUT
justice
of need
- does harm?
difference
now?